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ABSTRACT

This paper offers the reflections of three past presidents of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) during the year of the American community college's 100th anniversary. President emeritus Edmund J. Gleazer, Jr., describes some of the changes that altered the AACC during the years 1951-1981. In 1951, when Gleazer was hired as executive director, there were 400 community colleges with total enrollments of 869,000. When he retired as president, there were 1,219 community, junior, and technical colleges with enrollments of 4,887,675. President emeritus Dale Parnell, who was with AACC from 1981-1991, reflects on AACC's relations with funding agencies, members of Congress, and employer and labor groups. Parnell describes the efforts, beginning in 1980, to develop foundations for private funding of community colleges. Parnell also discusses the community college curricula, faculty, staff, and mission. President emeritus David R. Pierce discusses the years 1991-2000. Pierce credits the Clinton administration with increasing public awareness, and public policy shapers' awareness, of the importance of community colleges. Pierce also addresses the issue of the attitudes of university faculty toward the community college academic education. Pierce sees the problem stemming partly from the lack of investment in institutional research at the community college level. Pierce describes the ways in which this problem has begun to be addressed. (NB)

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Years in the Life:

Former Presidents Reflect on the American Association of Community Colleges

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In honor of the centennial celebration of the American community college, three former presidents of the American Association of Community Colleges reflect on the history, leadership, changes and major issues at the association—the "voice" for community colleges for over 80 years.

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Reflecting on the Years 1958–1981 in the Life of the American Association of Community Colleges

By Edmund J. Gleazer, Jr., AACC President Emeritus

Let me take you back to April, 1958. I am sitting in my office in suite 316 on the third floor of the American Council on Education building at 18th and Massachusetts Ave. in Washington. I am the new executive director of the American Association of Junior Colleges (AAJC) having just succeeded Jesse P. Bogue who had served as executive secretary for 12 years. Bogue informed me that one student in four beginning college work was doing so in a junior college. Total enrollments were 869,000. There were 400 community colleges in the country and 265 independent and church-related junior colleges. The membership of the AAJC was about 500 and the budget was $52,000 annually. I noted that there were two secretaries in the office and a part-time bookkeeper.

You might note that my title was a bit different from Bogue's. When I was asked about my interest in serving as executive officer for the Association I raised some questions about the nature of the job. (There was not much of a national search. I had been directing a national information project for the Association while on leave of absence as president of Graceland College in Iowa and had been elected president of AAJC a year before at the national convention.) I told the board that I had enjoyed my work as a college president and the opportunities for educational leadership. I was not interested in serving as executive secretary if that meant sitting down at the end of the board table and taking notes. If they envisioned the job to be somewhat similar to that of a college president in relation to the board and that the board would look to me for leadership, then I would be interested. They agreed to that and changed the title to executive director.

Changing the title didn't completely take care of all of the problems. The president of the Association and I did have some discussions very soon about the relative responsibilities of president and executive director. Some honest misunderstandings existed. A board committee was established to pour water on the fire.

The board was made up of 11 presidents (all male and all white). Two from the Southern accrediting association, two from the North Central, and one each from the other four regional accrediting areas. The past president, vice-president, and president also served as board members. The board members and officers were elected at the annual conventions in business sessions on the basis of nominations from a nominating committee made up of past presidents. In my experience with the Association, which went back to 1947, I do not recall any nominations from the floor of the business session until 1970.

It was also policy of the Association to rotate presidents between private and public sectors. Regional representation and public and private were important factors in selecting personnel.

Fortunately, in beginning my new career, it was soon possible to appoint an associate executive director, and then the big breakthrough came was when W. K. Kellogg Foundation made a five-year commitment, which they later extended "To aid in strengthening and expanding the professional services of this Association...and to give leadership to institutions, state departments of education and to local communities in the planning of community college programs." Kellogg also made grants to 10 universities to establish junior college leadership programs, and the Association related closely to the research and development work which flowed from those programs.

In addition to staff for publications and the Association's commissions, member institutions made voluntary contributions so that a legislative specialist was added in 1965.

In 1969 AAJC moved into the new National Center for Higher Education at Dupont Circle in Washington.

In the 60s, approximately 500 new community colleges were established. In earlier years many junior colleges were located in rural or suburban areas of the country. In the 60s and 70s community colleges were established for the first time in many of the major cities. Miami, Dallas, Fort Worth, St. Louis, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Seattle were among the major population centers developing multi-college or multi-campus systems serving large numbers of students. The open-door urban institutions served a new college-going population. Civil disorders in the big cities had their effect on these new urban colleges. One effect was the call for change in the Association that served this growing and changing body of institutions. Not only minorities, but others wanted a more visible role in the national association. Chicago City College teachers had gone on strike in 1967. Students were more involved at state levels and aiming toward the national organization and board members similarly. There were hundreds more public community colleges in the organization, but the basic organizational structures had not changed. The private institutions asked why the Association didn't do more for them.

At the 1970 annual meeting of the Association these strains were graphically evident. The leadership of the Association urged that we take a look at what we were doing as institutions and as an association and determine in what ways we needed to change. There were caucuses, minorities, nominations from the floor. The first black college president was elected to the board. The board approved a study and authorized a request for funds. The Kellogg Foundation agreed to fund it, and I was asked by the foundation to direct it and the board agreed. Kellogg said "So often we have funded studies that wind up on the shelf. We would like to see what happens if the people doing the study are responsible for carrying out the recommendations of the study."

The goal of what was called "Project Focus" was to determine what the thrusts of community and junior colleges should be in the future and how the national organization should respond in terms of its own objectives, functions, organization and administration. This meant organizational change.

The 1972 convention in Dallas authorized implementation of the Project Focus recommendations:

- Councils as a mechanism for broadening participation e. g. state directors, university professors, development officers, community service directors, etc.
- An expanded and diversified board as a policy-making body to 30 members.

• A changed management structure. The Association's executive officer designated president. Board of directors elects chairman. Elections by means of mail ballot.
• Changed name to American Association of Community and Junior Colleges.

Also approved was an addition to the statement of purpose as expressed in the Association constitution. These words added —

> "It (the Association) shall contribute in every practical way to the development of a better human environment in America by working for an extension of full educational opportunity to all Americans on an equitable basis, qualitatively and quantitatively, and by striving for the elimination of all forms of discrimination whether by race, creed, sex, or financial condition."

My recollections, using terminology of those times, the new Board included two Chicanos, five blacks, a Puerto Rican, an Asian-American, five women, a state education official, community college student, university professor, alumna of a private women's college, three members of boards of trustees, and a private citizen.

Implementation took time. A number of presidents were concerned that the new organization "diluted" their powers. The fact that 15 or half of the number of board members were required to be chief executive officers had to be repeated a number of times. Presidents then sought to establish a presidents' council. This had not been intended. The councils were to provide voice for other constituents but presidents felt they needed their own organization. There were a number of negotiating sessions where it was pointed out that if presidents had their own council this could be a divisive element. Wasn't there the danger that the presidents' council might become adversarial to the Asociation where presidents were still the major institutional representatives? Informal negotiations took place particularly with presidents in the North Central area. It was pointed out to them that perhaps a solution that would not be divisive would be to have an organization in which presidents could talk with other presidents about presidential matters and represent presidents' interests and at the same time be a professional development arm for the Association. It could be a President's "Academy". This was agreed to and the board of directors approved the restructuring of the Council of Chief Executive Administrators into an AACJC Presidents Academy.

There was still the matter of trustees. Various ways of participating had been mentioned. One called for the board (this was prior to Project Focus recommendations) to be made up of half trustees and half presidents. After the 1972 meeting trustees established their own council within the Association. There was another group which grew out of the National School Boards Association. Also there were trustees who were affiliated with the Association of College and University Trustees.

The newly formed Council of the American Association of Community and Junior College Boards agreed to merge with AACT to form one trustee organization. The immediate past president of ACCT who was on the new AACJC Board reported that the board of directors of that organization and AACJC and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges boards had struck accord in a tri-partite declaration of planned cooperation. ACCT and AACJC established a continuing partnership.

I completed 23 years of service as executive officer of the Association in 1981. There were 1,219 community, junior, and technical colleges (1,055 public) with enrollments totalling 4,887,675. As far as I know the basic organizational and administrative changes made in 1972 are still in effect.

Shortly prior to my passing the baton to Dale Parnell, the AACJC Board approved a new mission statement:

> The mission of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges is to organize national leadership and services for individual and community development through lifelong education.

Some Reflections About the Decade of 1981–1991 in the Life of the American Association of Community Colleges

By Dale Parnell, AACC President Emeritus

It is hazardous to reflect on the work of any decade in the life of a national association because so many individuals contributed to the work. First, Ed Gleazer and his colleagues established a solid foundation for the Association in the previous several decades. Without their leadership my decade of leadership in the Association would have been much more difficult. Secondly, there were many individuals during the decade of 1981–1991 that made major contributions to the work of the Association. At the risk of missing several names of the folks that helped the Association in so many ways, my mind thinks of Connie Odems, Jim Gollattscheck, Bernie Luskin, Frank Mensel, Jim White, Jim McKenney, Mary Ann Settlemire, Jim Mahoney, Bill Reinhard, Lucy Cooper, Diane Eisenberg, Barbara Daniels, Clyde Sakamoto and several others.

I also pay tribute to the many board members who were of consistent help and support. In fact over my 10 years with the Association working with 32 and 33 board members each year, I enjoyed all of them. These were first-rate leaders in their own right. One of the real privileges in working with community colleges is that there are so many caring and competent individuals involved in the movement, and I still think of it as a movement.

Our major goal in the work of the Association during the decade of the 1980s was to improve national community college connections on many fronts: with funding agencies, with members of Congress and their staffs, with other national associations, particularly employer and labor groups. We felt that it was important to help the leaders of these organizations gain some understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of community colleges.

Our second, but very important goal, was to become as inclusive as possible in the work of the Association. This called for consistently involving representatives of small colleges as well as representatives of large colleges in the work of the Association. We also wanted to involve representatives of all accredited junior colleges and technical colleges, as well as community colleges in the membership of the Association. Finally, there were some 21 or 22 councils associated with the Association that needed involvement. We chose to uti-

lize the strengths of these councils to develop and review various policies, such as the Associate Degree Policy Statement. These draft policies were then forwarded to the board of directors for final action. It was a great way to get input from the field and to gain from the expertise of these councils, and develop well-thought out recommended policies on a host of different subjects.

As the first Association president and chief executive officer to come from the ranks of the public community colleges, I brought with me a set of what I have called "within reach" beliefs and values about the work of community colleges. This philosophy undergirded much of the Association's activities during my decade of leadership. This "within reach" philosophy is composed of five "C's." A review of that philosophy will help explain, at least in part, what the Association was endeavoring to accomplish during the decade of the 1980s.

Community Colleges Are Community-Based Institutions

Community colleges are working partners with the communities they serve. As an example, local school districts, particularly feeder high schools, are part of the community being served by community colleges. I wrote a book in 1984, under the auspices of the Association, entitled "The Neglected Majority." The purpose of this book was to help the public understand that 70 to 75 percent of the adult population will never likely gain a baccalaureate degree, yet most of these individuals need some kind of post-secondary education. In this book, an outline of the Tech Prep Associate Degree Program was developed stressing the issue of curricular continuity between high schools and community colleges. Federal funding was secured to help support the continuing development of this program.

Another important community service provided by these community-based institutions is working with the employer community. During the 1980s a special Association project was initiated called "Keeping America Working." This project endeavored to stress the services that community colleges can provide helping employers with the education and training of the workforce. Today this community service is now accepted as commonplace in most community colleges.

Community colleges also work with various community agencies as well as serving the community with a host of non-credit and adult education learning experiences.

Various Association activities also focused on this aspect of being community-based institutions helping local communities solve community problems.

Community Colleges Are Cost-Effective Institutions

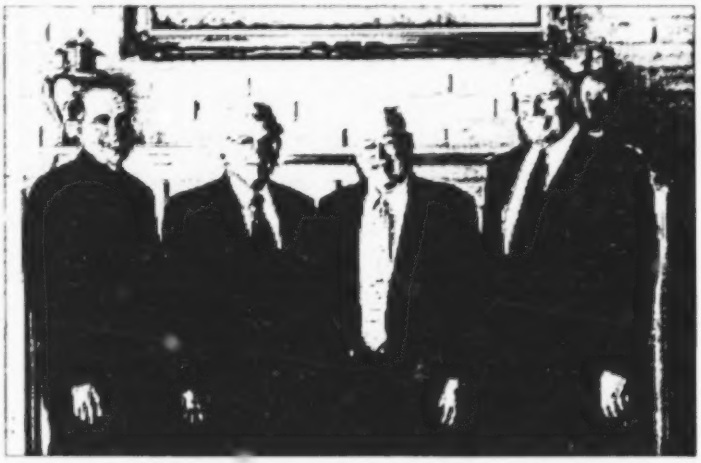
Community colleges must stay financially "within reach" of those being served. Keeping student tuition as low as possible is a basic article of faith for community college leaders and is one reason why we worked so hard to develop and increase the federal student financial aid programs during the 1980s. But, that is only one side of the financial ledger. Colleges make great effort to keep the costs for the taxpayers as low as possible. In that sense community colleges are the most cost-effective and productive institutions in higher education.

As a way to help colleges keep taxpayer costs low, Association efforts were made to increase private giving to community colleges. The Association was active during the decade of the 1980s in securing a $50 million Higher Education Act Title III fund dedicated for the exclusive use of community, technical and junior colleges as developing institutions. The primary purpose of this dedicated fund was to help community colleges establish foundations for private fundraising. At the beginning of 1980 there were relatively few foundations in community colleges. Today it is the rare college without a foundation, and private giving has increased greatly since that time.

Community Colleges Are Caring Institutions

Community colleges work hard at helping students really feel that they are more than a number. It is important that colleges stay psychologically "within reach" of those being served. Students and staff must feel that the leaders of the institution really care about them as individual human beings, and that a sense of community is established. This is particularly important in demographically diverse institutions.

The AACC Futures Commission was established in 1987 to develop recommendations about where community colleges should be headed in the next century. The late Ernest Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching served as the Commission chair. Discussion of the caring environment was one of the strong reasons that the commission slogan was developed: "Community means more than a region to be served, but a climate to be created." The commission issued a seminal report in 1990 that continues to provide guidance for college leaders. A major thrust of commission recommendations was aimed at building a sense of community in these demographically diverse colleges.



From left: George R. Boggs, current AACC President joins Gleazer, Parnell, and Pierce in February at the University of North Texas for the conference "A Century of Community Colleges in America."

Community Colleges Feature Competent and Diverse Faculty and Administration

Some of the best teaching I have observed in all of education goes on in the community college. College faculty are selected primarily on the basis of being solid and effective teachers. By and large community college faculty are hired to teach without all of the "publish or perish" expectations that accompany university faculty, or extra duties expected of high school faculty. However, the scholarly work of community college faculty has not been sufficiently recognized.

In order to help feature scholarly activity and outstanding scholarship in community colleges the All-USA Academic Team was established in cooperation with Phi Theta Kappa and the *USA Today* newspaper. This program continues today and has done much to help the general public appreciate the work of community colleges.

The Association gave much attention in the 1980s to encourage the movement of women and ethnic minorities into faculty and leadership positions. Much credit must go to the several councils representing these groups for their wise and effective approaches in making much progress in this arena. The number of ethnic minority and women college presidents more than doubled during the 1980s.

Community Colleges Offer a Comprehensive Curriculum

If there is one word that undergirds the community college it is the word "opportunity." Educational opportunity is offered to a host of otherwise educationally deprived individuals. Our Association slogan during the 1980s was "Opportunity with Excellence." This slogan was constantly emphasized in order to encapsulate the basic philosophy of the community college. This means that the curriculum is designed to meet a host of educational needs without watering down teaching standards. The liberal arts are offered along side occupational education. The Association worked closely with the National Endowment for the Humanities, as well as with the U.S. Department of Labor and Employer Communities. The comprehensive community college curriculum needs constant explanation and different approaches for funding are required. Much work was accomplished during the 1980s to help public and private funding agencies understand and appreciate the non-traditional community college curriculum.

With a rapidly changing economy and the emerging needs of the employer community, the Association worked hard during the 1980s to bring community college technical education up front and center on the national scene. Today, as an example of this effort, there is a deepening appreciation for the fact that most of the nurses on the floors of most hospitals today are associate degree nurses educated and trained at community colleges. The same can be said for many other occupations.

Community colleges offer extensive developmental and remedial education opportunities. Many adults come to the

community college having been out of school for many years and require some non-threatening help to upgrade their math, writing, and study skills. In addition, community colleges offer a host of non-credit adult education and community service courses and programs. Much Association work was done in the 1980s with members of Congress to help them understand the developmental education programs in community colleges and to be sure students in these programs were eligible for federal financial aid programs.

Summary Observation

The work of any national association must be evaluated against the political, cultural, and economic environment in which the leaders of that association must work. No attempt has been made in this brief article to analyze the environment of the 1980s. That decade was no more difficult than any other decade, but it did offer different challenges that called for different Association goals and priorities. It was certainly my privilege to serve a cause in which I so deeply believe, and work with talented Association board members and staff members during the decade of the 1980s.

Reflecting on the Years 1991–2000 in the Life of the American Association of Community Colleges

By David R. Pierce, AACC President Emeritus

The final decade of the 20th century saw community colleges take strides toward acceptance and recognition, but the decade ended with much work yet to be accomplished. Thanks in large part to the extraordinary visibility provided by the Clinton Administration, public policy shapers and the public itself grew enormously in their awareness of community colleges and came closer to viewing them as important members of the education community. However, many members of the higher education community, particularly university faculty, remained unconvinced that community colleges provided students with collegiate education at a high level of quality.

At least part of the problem can be attributed to a lack of investment in institutional research. To their credit however, community colleges made gains in this area throughout the decade so at its end, institutional research was being conducted at a higher level in both quantity and quality, than a decade earlier.

Knowing more about our institutions makes it possible to increase the public's awareness and understanding of them. Since advocacy was and is an Association priority, a program known as the National Awareness Initiative was adopted and by the end of the decade, over $100,000 annually was being budgeted to support this program.

The Association ended the decade with approximately the same number of regular staff that were employed at its start but their distribution had changed considerably. More staff were working in government relations, more in research and Membership & Information Services, more in information technology, and more in international programs. These changes permitted the Association to carry out agendas in these areas that strengthened its ability to advocate for community colleges more effectively and to move the Association in the direction of using technology in its programs and operations.

At mid-decade, the Association added organizational structure that was intended to strengthen advice and counsel received from its members as well as increase member involvement in the Association. The vehicle used to accomplish this was the commission, which had been around in one form or another for several years. At the time this change was being considered, commissions existed for institutional types including small/rural, urban, and independent institutions. To accomplish this change, seven commissions organized by program area replaced the three mentioned above. These new commissions had members from all types of institutions giving advice in program areas such as Publications and Public Relations, Economic Development, and Technology.

Although this new structure had only a short track record by the end of the decade, it was clear that most of its goals were being

met and that the Association's effectiveness had been increased substantially as a result.

Several of the strategic and tactical initiatives later adopted by the Association had their origins in the Commission process. Adoption of "focus areas" or "curriculum tracks" for the convention speakers and forums is one example of a very positive result. When the *Journal* issues were then paired with convention focus areas, strong reinforcement of the most critical issues was possible.

Another tactic related to the adoption of focus areas was creation of a "special focus," an issue that was judged to be in need of special attention on a national scale. A booklet on the issue was distributed at the convention and colleges were encouraged to adopt their own related initiatives. Remediation is an example of a recent special focus area.

Other initiatives that either originated within the Commissions or received special encouragement were the D.C. Experience and Taming Technology workshops. These workshops provided expanded professional development opportunities for CEO's and higher level administrators in a concentrated area important to their success as leaders and managers.

An area that was emphasized through the decade was building collaborative relationships with other organizations and entities. The Association has always placed a priority on this, but times and conditions allowed the Association to take some of these relationships to a higher level.

During Secretary Robert Reich's tenure, connections with the U.S. Department of Labor became very strong. There evolved a clear recognition that the economy had changed and that a world class workforce was the key to success as a nation. Futhermore, community colleges were seen as important players in preparing the workforce. This realization led to a series of partnership initiatives that are still in place producing benefit for community colleges.

A very different scenario with similar results played out with the National Science Foundation. In 1989, the Foundation awarded less than $2 million to community colleges. By the end of the decade, the total exceeded $50 million, with an announced goal that would take it to over $70 million in the very near future. Much of this dramatic increase must be attributed to the Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program which was started in 1993. This program, designed exclusively for associate degree granting institutions, brought community colleges into the NSF fold in large numbers, and the results were pleasing to all parties involved.

It should be mentioned that the NSF had clear vision in recognizing early on that community colleges were more than just passive observers in the preparation of teachers for elementary/secondary schools. They backed this vision with the award of grants and the expansion of the ATE program to include proposals for teacher education initiatives.

The decade closed with a most unlikely partnership being forged with the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). It occurred because of hiring and promotion policies the DVA had adopted that were detrimental to associate degree nurses. To the Department's credit, however, these policies were later rescinded and a formal consultation agreement was signed between the DVA, AACC, ACCT, and NOADN, the National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing. If it works as intended, there is a very low probability that a similar policy change can occur again.

Another important partner throughout the decade was the American Council on Education (ACE). Although its role is not always well understood within community college circles, it is very important in maintaining between-sector balance. During the decade, four unsuccessful attempts were made by various groups of universities to have the NCAA adopt the "junior red-shirt" rule for student-athletes who chose to attend a community college. In each instance, community colleges might not have prevailed without the support and assistance of the ACE and its staff.

Several other important collaborative relationships emerged during the decade, including the National Alliance of Business, the U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of Manufacturers, Microsoft Corporation, and the Council of Independent Colleges, to name but a few. Various councils affiliated with AACC also played important partnership roles. A special partnership existed between the Association and the ACCT. These two entities combined people and resources to enhance member value and benefit to both associations. One effort worthy of note was joint sponsorship of the National Legislative Seminar and another was the New Expeditions project which received funding from the Kellogg Foundation. There were many others, but the important factor was the spirit of cooperation that penetrated almost everything undertaken by these associations.

The 90s were years of change and progress that saw the nation's community colleges continue their march toward the critically important institutions they are and can be.

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